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CENSORSHIP AND LITERATURE UNDER NAPOLEON I.

THE Napoleonic régime was largely occupied with the elaboration of a system competent to curb the unbridled individualism that the Revolution had evoked, and of which the great Corsican was himself the chief exponent. Such a system could be but slowly elaborated, and it is not strange that it was never fully applied; the parts of it that were concerned with the moral and intellectual conditions of individual life and with the development and expression of public spirit were still largely in a state of experimentation when the Empire passed away. It was only in 1810 that the educational machine was fully set up with the organization of the University, and it was in the same year that the control of publication through a formal censorship was provided for by the establishment, as a bureau of the Ministry of the Interior, of the Direction Générale de l'Imprimerie et de la Librairie.

In the following pages I propose to examine closely the principles and practice of this Direction Générale as disclosed in its weekly reports through the period 1810-1814. The bureau however cannot be represented as constituting the complete censorship of the period, even with regard to the press, for the police supervision that up to 1810 had been all-powerful over all agencies of public expression and intercourse, was limited by the establishment of the formal censorship only with respect to non-periodic publications. And even here the censorship frequently found itself impeded by the police; there had been a bitter contest between the Ministries of Police and of the Interior all through the working out of the imperial decree of February 5, 1810, by which the Direction Générale had been established, and both Fouché and Savary continued to resent the curtailing of police jurisdiction that the decree represented. The present article therefore is not a full exposition of censorship under the later Empire, but a study of one branch of it, from the point of view chiefly of the administrative attitude toward literature and *esprit public*.¹ It is based on the authoritative and detailed account of the operations of the censorship that is preserved

¹ The substantial monograph of M. Henri Welschinger, *La Censure sous le Premier Empire* (Paris, 1887), aims to cover the whole field and does so with considerable success. The author, however, has passed over the bulletins of the Direction Générale somewhat hastily, and has occupied himself rather with the

for us in the weekly bulletins of the Director General to the Minister of the Interior, who was supposed to lay them before the Emperor. These extend with some breaks from April, 1810, to January, 1814. They were prepared by the Director General on the basis of the reports of the censors and inspectors (for the departments, of the préfets also), and no doubt often incorporated the ideas and even the language of the individual readers, though in general the form of statement implies the director's own examination and conviction. At times the director is requested by the minister to undertake a personal reading and report; aggrieved authors had the right of appeal to the minister, but this seems to have been but rarely exercised (I find but one instance of the manuscript being sent to another censor, who reversed the decision of the first). It is clear that the minister gave close attention to the bulletins and we find him not infrequently ordering or suggesting changes. It is impossible to say how far they came under the eye of the Emperor or how far the minister's interventions were thus caused. As in January, 1813, the latter asserted that he had long sought to impose leniency on the bureau, it is fair to assume that his attitude would date back to the strong expressions of dissatisfaction with the censorship used by Napoleon in the Council toward the end of 1811.² But the Emperor's earlier interventions were spasmodic and were probably not followed up. He did not like the censorship, for he was very sensitive as to the suspicion that he was afraid to let people say what they thought; but, as with the police tyranny, he could not dispense with it. It is clear however that he finally interposed decisively in the interests of leniency, the permanent results being evident from the statistics of censorship operation given in the subjoined note.² In 1811 more than thirty per cent. of the manu-

fortunes of the more noted writers than with the general attitude and influence of the bureau. The extracts from the bulletins given here and by M. Welschinger may be usefully supplemented by the citations from those of 1810 published in 1870-1871 by M. Charles Thurot in the *Revue Critique d'Histoire et de Littérature*. I have used these bulletins in two different manuscripts of the Archives Nationales, indexed as "AF IV. 1049, Rapports du Ministère de l'Intérieur", and "AF IV. 1354, Pièces Ministérielles"; there are 159 in all, blanks existing for June, July, August, and September, of 1810, and for July and August of 1812.

² Bulletin statistics, 1810-1814:

Date.	No. bulletins.	No. MSS.	No. corrections.	No. prohibitions.
1810	15	422	64	3
1811	48	669	163	76
1812	41	571	43	21
1813	51	585	2	14
1814	3	15	0	2
	<hr/> 158	<hr/> 2,262	<hr/> 272	<hr/> 116

scripts examined were corrected or prohibited, but in 1813 only somewhat less than three per cent. We should of course take into

Welschinger it is true asserts that the imperial interventions "ne produisit aucun effet utile et l'arbitraire continua" (p. 46), but it is evident that he had not examined the bulletins closely enough, and was probably basing his statement upon general literary complaints such as that quoted by him from Villemain. I have not found the document from which Welschinger quotes the Instructions issued by M. de Pommereul to the censors, December 22, 1812, in pursuance of the new orders; according to this the following principles were now laid down: "Lorsqu'un ouvrage vous est soumis, qu'il soit bien ou mal écrit, spirituel ou non, contenant des idées sages ou déraisonnables, ce ne sont point là des motifs pour proposer d'en suspendre ou arrêter la publication. L'ouvrage est-il obscène? Sa publicité serait-elle contraire aux règlements de police municipale? Alors a-t-il pour but de réveiller des passions, de former des factions, de semer du trouble dans l'intérieur? Le danger qu'il présente avertit assez de réclamer la défense de sa publication. L'intention libérale de Sa Majesté est que, à ces exceptions près, la presse jouisse d'une entière liberté." Welschinger admits that these new directions were followed by "une certaine détente dans la répression", but declares that it did not last. So far as the records show it lasted through the rest of the period. The cases of the two manuscripts set down as prohibited in January, 1814 (though only 15 had been submitted to the censors), will be found on examination to bear out this conclusion; both were reported by the director as being markedly of an objectionable political tendency, and yet in both instances the minister disapproved the action and ordered reconsideration (of the final outcome we have no information). As a matter of fact the milder régime had set in earlier than is indicated above, and quite suddenly, showing that some external pressure had been applied; for the months of January, February, and March, 1812, with 185 manuscripts examined, there were 10 prohibitions and 39 corrections, while for the months of April, May, June, September, October, November, and December (there were no bulletins for July and August), with 386 manuscripts there were only 4 corrections and 11 prohibitions. The activity in correction of the year 1811 and of the first three months of 1812 is even more striking than the prohibitions; it was in January, 1811, that Portalis was replaced by de Pommereul, and but for the proverbial activity of the "new broom" we should not have expected this result. Portalis had been very vigorous in his plans for corrections, and it may be that these plans came to the stage of application only after his removal. The manuscripts "corrigés" were for the most part simply mutilated. This activity naturally aroused much complaint, and to this doubtless were due the strong expressions employed by the Emperor in the Council of State, December 13, 1811 (Locré, *Discussion sur la Liberté de la Presse*, etc., Paris, 1819, p. 296 ff.), though they seem also to have been caused in part by his irritation at the demand of the bureau for larger appropriations. He intimated that it might be necessary to abolish the Direction Générale, and declared that "Il est nécessaire que la direction de l'imprimerie prenne des idées plus libérales. On sent maintenant tous les abus de cette institution. . . . Elle devrait savoir que la censure n'est établie que contre les libelles qui provoquent à la révolte; qu'elle laisse parler librement sur le reste; qu'elle souffre les caprices de la presse. Il est fort égal à l'État qu'un extravagant vienne dire par exemple: que c'est Louis XI qui a fait la révolution. . . . On réglemente beaucoup trop. Il est beaucoup de choses qu'un gouvernement sage abandonne à leur cours naturel. L'amour du mieux n'enfante pas tou-

account the presumed efficacy of the censorship, the effects of the making known of its principles and prejudices to authors and publishers; but the examination of the bulletins of the director shows that there was a real and forced relaxing of the earlier activity, and that this leniency was distasteful both to the individual censors and to M. de Pommereul. After the inauguration of the milder régime the bulletins of the Director General change in tone, and are devoted mainly to descriptive statements and to more or less jocular and trivial criticism. It is clear that the bureau was no longer taking itself very seriously; there is no further reference to the early educational campaign, and we get on the whole the impression that the worthy M. de Pommereul and his censors are more or less marking time.

The direct activity of the censorship proper seems to have been confined almost entirely to Paris and its vicinity, for in the provinces it is probable that the change brought about by the establishment of the new bureau amounted to but little more than a change of address of the prefectoral reports from the Ministry of the Police to the Ministry of the Interior. No doubt throughout the Empire as in Paris the surveillance of the police continued as before, but their activity was now detached from that of the préfets acting as agents of the formal censorship which existed as a bureau of the Ministry of the Interior.³ I shall not delay on this provincial censorial activity, for it is of minor importance, and is represented but slightly in the bulletins of the Director General; the provincial press had virtually ceased to exist as a medium or factor in public opinion, and the publication provincially of a new book had become a rare event. The activity of the censorship in Paris had of course reference very largely to the reading public of the provinces, though from

jours le bien; et les innovations sont rarement heureuses". It will be remembered that Napoleon's interventions in administration were frequently not followed up, and that they often occurred under such circumstances as justified the impression that they did not proceed from clear conviction and settled policy and consequently could not be safely regarded as laying down rules of action. But in this case there is no reason to doubt that his attitude continued consistent and that the censorship began to respond to it by the spring of 1812.

³ Reference is frequently made in the bulletins to information furnished by the préfets in pursuance of the instructions "données à MM. les Préfets par le Directeur Général de la Librairie". Inspectors of the censorship were employed in the surveillance of distribution through local booksellers and through colporteurs throughout France, but it is not clear whether they reported directly or through the préfets, or what their relations were to the similar agents of the police. The large range of this surveillance as compared with that of the police is probably indicated in the reference of the bulletins to efforts of its agents to furnish extended information as a basis for a policy of improving popular reading.

points of view which seem to become less prominent as time passed. It is the provinces mainly that are in view when the censorship planned most aggressively, took itself most seriously; the first director, Count Joseph Portalis, a strenuous and pedagogic bureaucrat, entered upon his work with much enthusiasm as to the opportunity offered to direct popular reading and thus mould public opinion. His second report as Director General, dated May 31, 1810, addressed to the Emperor direct, was prefaced by some general considerations.

J'ai recueilli [he says] des renseignements sur l'état de l'imprimerie et de la librairie dans toutes les Parties de l'Empire, sur le nombre et l'espèce des livres qui s'impriment et qui se vendent, sur le nombre et l'espèce de ceux qui s'importent, sur l'esprit des journaux étrangers et leur Tendance générale. En France dans les Départements on n'imprime que des livres de Piété, des livres élémentaires ou classiques. La Publication d'un nouvel Ouvrage y est un Phénomène, et la Réimpression de quelques anciens livres importants n'y est pas moins rare. Néanmoins ça et là on remarque quelques compilations de jurisprudence et quelques nouvelles éditions des écrivains du siècle de Louis XIV. C'est la Librairie qui doit fixer là toute mon attention. Les Libraires vendent peu et louent beaucoup leurs livres. Cet Usage est peu favorable au Progrès des Connoissances utiles. Il popularise les livres frivoles et favorise l'oisiveté. Plusieurs Préfets, beaucoup d'Évêques, quelques Libraires même se plaignent de la Circulation presque ouverte dans leurs Départements d'un grand nombre d'Ouvrages qui à force d'outrager les Mœurs, les Lois et les Bienséances sociales, outragent la Nature même. . . . J'ai recueilli les titres de trente-cinq ouvrages contre les Mœurs qui circulent, malgré les efforts de la Police.

After pointing out the insufficiency of the means at the disposal of the censorship he concluded:

Sire, la Direction Générale de l'Imprimerie ne doit pas se borner à réprimer seulement, son plus beau Ministère sera d'inspirer. Si Votre Majesté daigne agréer mes vues en recueillant par Degrés la Statistique personnelle de la France savante et littéraire, je parviendrai à connoître nos ressources et à les rendre disponibles.

It is no doubt the views and probably the language of Portalis that we find in a circular issued from the Ministry of the Interior to the préfets October 9, 1810,⁴ and apparently referred to in

⁴ The policy here expounded by Portalis can be traced back in considerable degree to Bonaparte's earlier counsellors in the Consulate. The state papers of Étienne Portalis, father of Joseph, one of the leading administrative spirits of the Consulate, will be found to outline it to some extent; in 1802 we find Roederer, conseiller d'état, charged provisionally with the conduct of public instruction, reporting to the Minister of the Interior how he had judged it "très utile de faire faire pour l'an XI un Almanach populaire qui fasse connaître à Deux Cents mille Paysans leur premier Magistrat et beaucoup de choses utiles", and how only the

later reports of the préfets as Instructions of the Director General. This document is of much interest with respect both to the censorship and to the literary and intellectual conditions of the time.

Il est [it asserts] une multitude de petits écrits que nos presses reproduisent chaque année en grand nombre, et qui sont la bibliothèque des pauvres et les premiers livres de l'enfance; il est impossible qu'il ne fixe pas l'attention d'une sage administration: ils ont une influence directe sur l'esprit du peuple des villes et des campagnes; il leur doit toutes ses connaissances acquises. Ses opinions, ses préjugés, ses affections en dépendent plus ou moins. Il croit y reconnaître les conseils de la philosophie du siècle, les vérités démontrées par une expérience universelle, l'opinion des hommes éclairés, le ton et les usages des hommes polis, le langage du jour, et la peinture des mœurs du temps. On s'étonne quelquefois du progrès universel de certaines opinions nuisibles, qui frappe trop tard les regards de l'autorité; mais on en aurait prévenu les effets; si l'on avait, dès l'origine, empêché la circulation de quelques écrits obscurs qu'on a méprisés autant qu'ils paraissaient méprisables. De ce nombre sont les almanachs, les calendriers, les annuaires, les recueils de contes, d'anecdotes, de chansons, de pronostics, de cantiques, de plaintes, les relations des événements récents, les jugemens des cours criminelles, les abécédaires, croix de par Dieu, et autres menus ouvrages. Leur nombre, cependant, est tellement multiplié, et leur apparition si journalière, qu'il est impossible de les soumettre à l'examen de MM. les Censeurs Impériaux; dès-lors, j'ai cru devoir éveiller sur ce point votre sollicitude, et vous inviter à les faire examiner avec soin.

Directions follow as to this surveillance, especially with regard to the necessity of removing

tout ce qui peut inquiéter les esprits faibles et crédules, tout ce qui tend à fortifier des préjugés superstitieux ou à les faire naître, enfin toutes limited means at his disposal prevented him from doing "cent choses semblables" (AF IV. 1050). The circular of 1810 was responded to very promptly by some of the préfets; the préfet of the Bas-Rhin writes in the same month that he "a fait disparaître de plusieurs almanachs soumis à son examen par ordre du Directeur de la Librairie, des chansons" and other material, while from the Department of the Po it is soon announced that good results are already following from these steps. A bulletin of this period refers to these popular publications as appearing in "des millions d'exemplaires". They were spread abroad mainly by colporteurs; the director's bulletin of December 29, 1810, describes one of the manuscripts listed as passed without change as "un de ces opuscules qui composent la Bibliothèque du Peuple et la Pacotille des Colporteurs. On travaille à les épurer et le Directeur Général de la Librairie se propose de les remplacer peu à peu avec l'aide et le concours de MM. les Préfets par des écrits dignes des Lumières du Siècle et propres à entretenir dans les Ames ou à y allumer des Sentimens d'Amour et de fidélité pour les Souverains, l'esprit d'Honneur, de Bravoure, et de Générosité qui doivent former parmi nous le véritable esprit national". A bulletin of the previous month had expressed the intention of undertaking a similar supervision of text-books: "Ce serait le seul moyen de rendre leur travail non seulement sans danger, mais d'une utilité incontestable, et cette méthode aurait encore l'avantage de doubler leur mérite comme auteurs en leur imprimant ce caractère d'originalité qui leur manque".

les prédictions politiques qui intéresseraient la tranquillité de l'État, inspireraient des craintes sur la stabilité de nos institutions, ou exciteraient des inquiétudes pour l'avenir.

The *chansons et contes* are to be revised in the interests of decency and morality, though "il faut se souvenir dans quel pays et dans quel siècle nous vivons, et se garder de confondre l'enjouement et la gaieté avec la licence et le vice". Better things were to be inculcated by substituting

des faits glorieux tirés de l'histoire de l'Empire et de nos armées, des maximes de morale, des actes de courage, des exemples d'humanité. On propagerait ainsi ces sentiments d'honneur, de franchise, de loyauté, d'amour pour le souverain, qui doivent caractériser la nation française; on nourrirait son enthousiasme pour le Fondateur de l'Empire; on la familiariserait avec nos institutions nationales et la pratique de tous les devoirs.

It is evident that a policy of this sort would be subject to fluctuations dependent largely on personal and other fleeting elements. It may be conjectured that no field of administration could be more in need of elucidation from the personal side than that of censorship; in most cases however the necessary information is almost unattainable. The two quite commonplace officials who were at the head of the bureau during the period were of very different origins and characteristics. The general outlines of those of the first occupant of the post, Count Joseph Portalis, will perhaps have been already indicated; the son of one of the most remarkable of the early Napoleonic statesmen, he had been caught early by the great machine, was laborious and pedantic, a born bureaucrat, with little of the father's great talent and personality. His career was short, for early in 1811 he came under suspicion of lukewarmness in the crusade against papal emissaries. His successor, the Baron de Pommereul, who had been one of the young Bonaparte's examiners on his passage from military school to active service, was older and more pliable, and kept the place to the end. As it was his business to make enemies and as the enemies he made were more or less addicted to personalities through practice in the profession of letters, we perhaps may discount the statements that come down to us about him from aggrieved authors; it is clear however that he was not misled by the enthusiasms that had fired his predecessor, that he sailed close to the wind, that the desires of the man higher up found in him no damaging resistance. As to the ten or twelve obscure readers whose work lies behind the bulletins we know little more than the names; they were styled imperial censors to distinguish

them from those attached to the Ministry of Police, and had retaining fees of one thousand two hundred francs yearly with additional pay for work done. In addition to the general utility men the list included a learned antiquary, whose function it was to nose out plagiarists in the interest of the revenue (a tax being imposed on all reproductions), a sound Gallican theologian, and a couple of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Relations.

My illustrations of the spirit and operation of the censorship by extracts from the director's weekly bulletins will necessarily be too limited to show its scope fully. It will be convenient to group the material under three main heads, political, educational, literary.

Works in the field of politics or government were of course abandoned without defense to the vigilance of the censor, sure to greet them with suspicion. General attacks on the existing order were naturally prohibited, and there was also a steady endeavor to prevent criticism or even discussion of any of the new institutions. This is easily explainable and not unreasonable; it is for the most part in line with one of the most steadily applied principles of the Napoleonic administration (a principle, by the way, not steadily applied by the older absolutism), *viz.*, that of preventing any expressions of public opinion with regard to the principles or acts of established authorities. No official act more surely evoked the imperial displeasure than a resort to the public press in the case of collision between authorities or between authorities and the public. Public opinion was not openly recognized; that an official should publicly assume that there was a public opinion or that it could express itself on current public questions, was to show himself as harking back to the evil revolutionary days and thoroughly unfitted for his post. It was again one of the most thoroughly established principles of the censorship that any public recalling of the memory of the revolutionary or Bourbon pre-revolutionary days should be frowned on, should be presumed to indicate questionable motives or incapacity for good citizenship; disparaging comparisons were not to be tolerated and people with inconveniently long memories were sufficiently a nuisance to be classed with criminals.

In applying these general positions the censorship found itself at times more or less embarrassed and not infrequently seems guilty of inconsistency. It was hard to draw the line between preventing unwelcome references and completely ignoring the recent past; history was being made so rapidly that it was difficult to keep up. More than once the censor was obliged to interfere with otherwise

quite harmless geographical books because they referred to states that had but recently passed away and might be supposed to be still regretted; the tabooing of the name of Bourbon presented difficulties in the historical instruction of youth. One enterprising educator found himself deprived at one stroke of two hundred pages of his work, "qui n'étaient pas en harmonie avec les principes de notre gouvernement", while the manuscript of another was entirely suppressed because it did not seem fitting to let him entertain the public with his fancies as to the future relations of France and Austria. The prohibition of M. Debrai's *Essai sur la Force, la Puissance, et la Richesse Nationale* was probably due mainly to the author's unwise praises of the English commercial system in his advocacy of such "pensées triviales" as that governments ought to admit without taxation all raw material not indigenous, and that the foreign policy of a country should be based on its commercial interests.

It was to be expected that the censorship should show a constant zeal in guarding the sacred person of His Majesty, a zeal that was not always appreciated. Napoleon would have homage, but he wanted it to be in good taste and to have at least the appearance of spontaneity; it always irritated him to have this spontaneity too closely associated with official pressure. One of the chief ways in which we find the bureau exhibiting tenderness for the imperial susceptibilities is in its watchfulness over references to individuals who had lost imperial favor; the tactless author who concluded his article on General Kléber in an *Histoire des Généraux Français* with "un éloge démesuré que la malveillance ou la sottise auraient pu faire envisager comme un trait lancé d'une main impuissante contre une gloire et une renommée au dessus de toutes les gloires", found that "cet éloge a disparu". A later appearance of the Egyptian theme seems to have occasioned more embarrassment to M. de Pommereul. In 1812 he prohibited the *Egyptiad*, an heroic poem on the Bonapartist conquest, because the author had not risen to the height of his theme. "Ce n'est point par un ouvrage si inférieur que Sa Majesté doit être louée. Il lui faut un Homère. Alexandre ne voulait être peint que par Apelles." But an additional objection was conveyed in the carefully worded query, "l'Empereur n'ayant pas conservé l'Égypte, conviendrait-il de faire une grande épopée de sa conquête?" The minister to whom the report was made passed over this delicate point, and remarked that, while any unfitting allusions were to be suppressed, he did not think the poem should be prohibited simply because of its mediocrity. The clemency here suggested was extended with evident regret in the case of an *Histoire*

de Bonaparte (a title which, by the way, was ordered changed to that of *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Napoléon le Grand*), where however there were suppressed "quelques détails sur les premières années de la vie du héros et différens discours mis dans sa bouche".

Il est trop difficile [remarks M. Portalis] de traiter un pareil sujet dignement pour qu'on soit étonné de l'imperfection de tant d'ouvrages enterpris sur un thème si beau et si fécond. On souffre de voir traves-tir, ou rendre en mauvais termes ce qui est grand et beau de sa nature . . . mais il faut compatir à l'empressement du public . . . et à la bonne intention des écrivains.

That, however, there were limits to the censor's receptivity of the Emperor's praises is shown by the suppression in a drama of a eulogy of His Majesty on the ground that it had been put in the mouth of one of the rogues of the piece.

Any presentations of the recent history of France or of Europe would necessarily involve the very delicate matter of the revolutionary origins of the existing régime; it can occasion no surprise to find the censorship very sensitive in regard to such references and on the whole decidedly averse to having the period dealt with at all. This is in line with the whole spirit of the administration, anxious, not necessarily to deny its origin or its earlier principles, but to leave unstirred all dangerous questions and events, and to continue quietly with its task of reconciling all interests and classes to the new institutions and to one another. This is well illustrated by the corrections and remarks concerning a production entitled *Les Tombeaux du Dix-Huitième Siècle*. "L'auteur", we are told, "passe en revue tous les hommes remarquables de cette centurie dont il feint de visiter les tombeaux. . . . Le Directeur de la Librairie pense qu'il était au moins inutile d'évoquer de pareilles ombres. Il ordonne la suppression de tous les tombeaux révolutionnaires à commencer par celui de Louis XVI". It was not often indeed that any commendatory references to the men either of the Old Régime or of the Revolution escaped a jealous pruning. An educational treatise on the model of Rousseau's *Émile* was subjected to correction because the central figure was described as a noble of the Old Régime forced by the Revolution to emigrate. "On a fait disparaître cette indication", says the director, "on n'a pas besoin d'avoir émigré pour donner une éducation chrétienne à ses enfans". The recalling of the Bourbon past was perhaps even more frowned upon than references to revolutionary days; and when during the Emperor's absence in Russia the bureau became aware that manu-

scripts in favor of the old dynasty were being passed from hand to hand the nervousness became extreme. A *Vie du Général Monck* was prohibited because of the suspicion that only an adherent of the exiled Bourbons could have any interest in calling attention to the restorer of the House of Stuart; an *Histoire du Bourbonnais*, it is intimated, would have been suppressed if the author had not had the good judgment to stop "au moment où la race des anciens seigneurs de ce nom s'éteint".

This vigilance was no doubt very discouraging to historical research, but though quite a number of brief histories of France appear only to be sadly mutilated, we do not seem on the whole to have lost much that we cannot do without. We should like indeed to have had preserved the work which aimed to present a study of the statements as to local conditions and instructions sent up with the deputies to the États Généraux of 1789; it was rejected because it was constantly harping on the vague idea of popular power and sovereignty, and because it presumed to propose reforms in the Napoleonic laws. No such regret perhaps will be extended to a Dutch publication entitled *Delicia Poetica*, proscribed because "une très grande partie de ce recueil a son origine dans les opinions exaltées de 1792 et 1793". The differences presented by these earlier eras are strongly insisted on in a critical reference to the appearance of a new edition of De Flassan's *Histoire de la Diplomatie Française*; although the work is not proscribed, objection is expressed to the disclosures it makes of the diplomatic secrets of the old French state.

Mais l'ouvrage est déjà publié; l'ancienne diplomatie, même celle du règne de Louis XVI., est aussi vieillie que si elle avait deux mille ans. Tout est changé autour de nous. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'une nouvelle dynastie, ce sont les temps qui ne sont plus les mêmes. L'Empereur a commencé une nouvelle ère pour le monde politique, même l'ordre social, même l'art de gouverner comme celle de vaincre et de combattre sont renouvelés en entier.

It is perhaps surprising that the prejudice against publications relating to the French Revolution was not also extended to those that dealt with the preceding American one; on the contrary, in 1813 we find an approving notice of a translation from the Italian of Botta's *Histoire de la Guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis*. This was probably due to the part taken by France in that struggle, especially since France was again at war with England. It certainly would not seem to be explainable by any tenderness toward the contemporary United States, if we may judge by a reference to a work unfortunately not approved because objected to by the Minister

of Foreign Relations as inopportune. This was entitled *Aperçu des États-Unis au 19^e Siècle jusqu'en 1810*, by M. Félix Beaujour: "Les Anglo-Américains", remarks the director, "ne se sont pas encore présentés devant un miroir plus fidèle. Ils seraient bien connus en France si cet ouvrage peu étendu mais plein et substantiel pourrait voir le jour". We may I think assume that the reflection in this mirror was not complimentary. This intervention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalls an important limitation of the bureau's freedom of action. It was not only constantly interfered with by the police, but it was obliged to refer to various departments of the administration such projected publications as were likely to be of particular interest to them—a reference that was especially important for manuscripts in the province of the *Ministre des Cultes*. One of the interventions from the diplomatic side is of interest as displaying one of the embarrassing sides of the censorial system; it is with regard to the prohibition of a volume entitled *Versailles, Paris, et Londres*, described by the director as not ill-intentioned but very stupid. "Mais dans un pays", he explains, "où le public croît que les ouvrages politiques sont faites par ordre du Gouvernement ou publiés sous sa censure, il est impossible de laisser paraître de telles rhapsodies". This leads to the reflection that manifestly an active censorship would proceed very easily from corrections to suggestion. There are many instances of such suggestions, as in the case of the text-book on geography to which the Foreign Office insisted on adding some maps, or of the translation of Costigan's *Letters on the Government, Manners and Customs of Portugal*, to which the translator was required to add various remarks on the duplicity of the English conduct in that country, and on the great improvement effected by the short sojourn of the French.

This last instance represents an attitude which we find the censorship frequently exhibiting; for the number of manuscripts on English affairs or containing references to England that were submitted was surprisingly large. In spite of the war and of the Napoleonic commercial policy the intellectual relations between the countries continued to subsist in a large degree, and evidences of the fact have a good deal of interest. The reception of English thought in France was still such as frequently to disturb the censorship, which lost no opportunity of discrediting it. This inhospitality does not it is true often extend to purely literary productions, the frequent translations in this field being seldom interfered with. But in all other ways every opportunity is taken of working against "cette Anglomanie que nos écrivains du siècle dernier nous ont si imprudemment

inoculés et dont ceux du siècle présent auront quelques peines à nous guérir". Every occasion is seized to revile British institutions; even trial by jury (almost the only part of the revolutionary innovations in judicial procedure that Napoleon had let live) was referred to as "n'offrant aucun avantage au degré de civilisation où nous sommes parvenus". Eulogies of the British constitution received short shrift; a book entitled *Anecdotes Anglaises et Américaines* was in 1813 strongly approved of as disclosing the vices of the British system, showing (to use the language of the bulletin) "que la constitution anglaise ne donne au peuple qu'elle régit ni la garantie ni les droits ni les libertés dont on prétend qu'il lui est redevable; que si les Anglais ont une moralité, leur gouvernement dans ses rapports publics n'en reconnaît et n'en pratique aucune". One instance of these attacks is of interest in more than one way; it is in connection with the passing of a book concerning Lord Elgin's antiquarian activities in the Levant in 1799.

Les anglais [the bulletin proceeds] qui n'ont pas le sentiment des beaux arts, qui n'ont encore produit aucun grand peintre, aucun grand sculpteur, aucun grand musicien, ont heureusement beaucoup d'or et non moins d'orgueil; ils y joignent une jalousie nationale qui les excite à se montrer toujours nos rivaux. M. de Choiseul-Gouffier a illustré son ambassade par son beau voyage de la Grèce. Le Lord Elgin a voulu l'imiter et faire aussi son voyage pittoresque. . . . Elgin obtint de la Porte la permission de faire des fouilles à Athènes et on sait qu'il en a abusé au dernier point. Les magnifiques bas-reliefs du temple de Thésée ont été brisés et mutilés pour en ravir quelques fragments, et l'insouciance Ottomane a été moins fatale aux restes d'Athènes que la cupidité et la barbarie de cet Anglais.

The attitude of the censorship toward educational books and problems can perhaps be regarded as of even more interest than the manner in which it carried out the policy imposed upon it in the field of political authorship. The importance of the training of the young was now being realized in a new sense; while the freedom of the eighteenth century was still demanded by some defiant spirits, the vast majority had fallen in with the declared policy of the new government of entrenching Society and the State behind the old religious and moral bulwarks, and developing anew a sense of discipline and a respect for authority that would harmonize with and be a secure prop for the restored monarchical system. The gropings of the Revolutionary and early Napoleonic years toward the setting up of educational machinery had now at length produced a system that seemed a marvel of centralization; the new University of France, embracing all stages and conditions of the educational process, was organized and operating. It was organized, as was the

censorship, as a section of the Ministry of the Interior, and the Director General in this first period seems animated by the ambition of being really a co-ordinate educational force, if not of developing a superior educational control. Count Joseph Portalis was a very serious young man, and (as has been shown in part above) he lost no time in magniloquently enunciating extended plans for influence through his office in general education, as well as for the direction of the adult spirit. His first general bulletin set forth this programme explicitly; after dwelling upon the unsatisfactory character of popular publications, he proceeds:

Il me semble que ce n'est que par le Décret du 5 février [establishing the censorship], que Votre Majesté a achevé de ressaisir la plénitude du Pouvoir souverain. La Philosophie moderne avait dépouillé le Sacerdoce de l'Empire absolu qu'il prétendait sur les âmes, mais elle ne l'avait point restitué à la Puissance Civile. L'Enseignement public restait en des mains indépendants et cette indépendance n'était pas moins contraire à un bon ordre et à l'intérêt de l'État que l'asservissement de cet enseignement à des Corps étrangers à l'État. Le grand Principe de l'unité était violé. Aujourd'hui l'Université Impériale ou le Corps enseignant, la Direction Générale de l'Imprimerie ou la Censure, et le Ministère des Cultes, forment un Ensemble complet, Oeuvre prodigieuse de Votre génie et par lequel Votre Majesté s'est remise en possession de cette Souveraineté des esprits et des Mœurs que les Législateurs anciens avaient si précieusement maintenue et que dans les siècles malheureux les ignorants dominateurs des nations avaient laissé échapper. Ce qui importe, Sire, c'est que ces grands Principes de Droit public, ces belles et fécondes Maximes de Gouvernement soient développés.

In later bulletins of the year Portalis followed this up by pointing out the measures he had taken or was meditating for reinforcing the work of the schools in popular education; some of these I have already referred to. With such aims text-books were sure of being regarded critically, and I have shown above how this care was applied in the field of recent history. The historical texts however seem to have remained quite unequal to the aims of the director.

Pourquoi ne remarquerait-on pas [he cries] combien à ce sujet il serait désirable qu'on put distinguer au milieu de tant de productions indigentes qui paraissent sur l'histoire de notre temps, deux cents pages éloquentes, riches de faits non encore exposés et appuyés sur les témoignages les plus authentiques, qui retraçassent la gloire de la Patrie et de son auguste Chef sous des couleurs vives et nobles, et qui pussent familiariser les élèves des Lycées avec les hauts faits du Fondateur de l'Empire, comme ils le sont avec ceux des héros de l'antiquité; qui gravassent dans leurs mémoires les noms des batailles d'Jéna et de Friedland comme le sont ceux des batailles d'Arbèles et Marathon, et qui leur fit connaître au moins aussi bien l'origine du Code Napoléon que celle des douze tables. Un des torts de notre éducation moderne a toujours été de nourrir exclusivement la jeunesse de souvenirs étrangers.

On another occasion after dwelling again on this defect the director announces his intention of entering upon a reform by compilations for the use of young children, as it was of special importance to apply the improvement at a tender age.

The taste of the Baron de Pommereul in text-books was apparently not so exacting as that of his predecessor. In January, 1813, he approved, though with doubt as to the title, an *Alphabet du Roi de Rome*, "qui se compose de 24 leçons sur les vertus nécessaires à un chef de gouvernement, suivies chacun d'un trait de la vie de l'Empereur qui offre l'exemple et l'application de cette vertu". He was however as dissatisfied as Portalis with the quality of the historical texts, and grudgingly passed a new *Instruction sur l'Histoire de France* with the remark, "Voilà depuis peu d'années à peu près le cinquantième qu'on publie, et tout mauvais et insignifiants qu'ils soient on les achète. C'est véritablement distribuer les poisons. Cet abrégiateur s'est jetté dans l'histoire des Gaulois, et nous a mené jusqu'à la bataille d'Austerlitz." A *Biographie des Jeunes Gens*, which is described as a bookseller's speculation, leads the director to complain that "il est bien fâcheux que l'Université, faite pour donner une direction à l'enseignement, n'ait pas occupé son nombreux et opulent état major à refaire tous les livres d'enseignement, qu'elle aurait rempli d'un autre esprit que celui qu'y peuvent mettre tant de ridicules et ignorans compilateurs, de celui en fin qui serait en harmonie avec nos moeurs, nos lois, et notre gouvernement". M. de Pommereul returns to this demand on the University on another occasion, attacking its inactivity in spite of its "grand état major de conseillers, d'inspecteurs, de recteurs, de proviseurs", etc. But in the field of historical research he found on one occasion more activity than he could approve of, when with grave distrust he passed M. Serlet's *Histoire Critique des Révolutions Romaines depuis Romulus jusqu'à Auguste*.

Nous avons longtemps lu l'histoire Romaine [remarks the bulletin] avec une admiration presque superstitieuse. . . . Les temps sont extrêmement changés. Ce n'est plus un doute raisonnable qu'on essaie d'inspirer, c'est une satire qu'on en veut faire. Tous les récits sont des fables. Nos docteurs modernes dans leurs leçons publiques nient que Régulus se soit immolé à sa patrie, comme si cet acte de dévouement, vrai ou faux, n'était pas toujours une admirable leçon à donner aux élèves. . . . qu'y a-t-il donc à gagner pour nos descendants à vouloir leur persuader que tant d'actes d'héroïsme et de vertu n'ont point eu lieu? Cette critique indiscrete et trop facile me paraît un des plus grands travers de l'esprit de nos nouveaux pédagogues.

For my present purpose the exercise of the censorship in the interests of religion and morality may be classed as educational.

But it is a large additional field of activity, evoking frequent interventions, and can only be glanced at. Here the censorship cannot be accused of bigoted or devotional tendencies, its spirit being rather the secularizing spirit of the eighteenth century, tempered by the conditions established through Bonaparte's restoration of the Church. Harmony between the new Charlemagne and his pope had indeed long since departed, but the State for statesmanlike reasons continued to demand respect for the Church, and to uphold its place as one of the chief props of society and government. In the field of morals the austere and pedagogical Portalis was much more severe than his older and more military successor; both the minister and the Emperor however seem to have intervened in the later period against a policy that was charged with being Puritanic. As we should expect, it is M. Portalis who is particularly concerned to uphold the Church as the basis of morality and an indispensable prop to Society and the State. He even enters on the Herculean labor of keeping the novel of the day in line with decency and safe theology. "Les romans", he says, "sont la bibliothèque des anti-chambres, et si elle est infestée de déclamations contre la croyance salutaire d'une Providence divine, ses lecteurs pauvres et violents et sûrs de l'impunité, seront des sots, comme le dit très bien Voltaire, s'ils n'assassinent pas leurs maîtres pour voler leur argent". Seizures and confiscations of obscene books and prints are frequently referred to. A manuscript is reported as shorn of "quelques détails obscènes", while in another the author is required to cast a veil "sur des nudités trop révoltantes" (the veil which one ingenious writer attempted to furnish by writing only the first letters of his objectionable words was not regarded by M. Portalis as sufficiently opaque). Another romance is prohibited on the ground of immorality in allowing the adventures of two rogues to be wound up by a happy and prosperous marriage; "Le roman n'est précisément obscène, mais il est au moins d'une très mauvaise moralité. C'est le vice menant à un état prospère."

The learned M. Lenoir in his *Histoire des Arts en France*, too engrossed in his researches to have noticed that the revolutionary tone was no longer in fashion, had permitted himself to make slighting references to divinity as "une invention de l'ignorance", as also to the great legislators of mankind.

On l'a prié de modifier ces locutions qui attaquent l'existence de Dieu, l'immortalité de l'âme, et le respect du au législateur. On peut dans un ouvrage de philosophie disputer les points les plus importants de la religion naturelle, mais il ne faut pas dans un livre pour ainsi dire populaire glisser des maximes contraires à des dogmes qui n'appartiennent pas moins à la sociabilité qu'à la religion.

The criticism of manuscripts in the fields of dogma or religious philosophy was furnished by an ecclesiastic of decided Gallican convictions, and he was instructed to hold an even course between maintaining respect for religious things and encouraging mysticism or excessive piety. The frequently expressed apprehension as to mysticism (we might also say as to undue piety) is perhaps peculiarly French; a religious revival was however making headway, and there were good political reasons for not encouraging it. The *Souvenirs Continuels de l'Éternité* by M. Lasausse, described by the Director General as an "espèce de missionnaire à l'imagination bouillante", was suppressed because the author had addressed himself *con amore* to the task of terrifying the frivolous and was thought likely to have much success. Another and more philosophical book on the same subject was passed with the contemptuous remark, "Lira qui pourra". A theological work in support of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is prohibited with the wish that "ces jongleries du 14^e siècle" might be relegated to the age which had produced them; this particular decision the minister did not accept, but forwarded the manuscript to the *Ministre des Cultes*. A treatise on Divine Love is rejected because containing "des germes de quiétisme qui ne me paraissent propres qu'à entretenir l'illusion de quelques faibles imaginations"; in this case also the minister orders a new report. *Les Anges Gardiens des Hommes* is in the Dutch language and the censor records the fact with satisfaction, for in his opinion it is a homily, "la plus triste, la plus froide, la plus ennuyieuse dont on ait pu s'aviser".

It was to the field of belles-lettres that most of the attention of the censors was directed, and their literary criticisms are often of very considerable interest, more especially perhaps with regard to the origins of French romanticism. Of the 116 manuscripts submitted to the censorship in the month of April, 1812, seventy-six were literary; we may probably regard this as a representative proportion. Even when not considered objectionable these productions were described in the bulletins, and the descriptions were frequently accompanied by reflections as to the literary conditions and tendencies of the day. The student of public spirit in France will find here much information concerning popular reading and the intellectual tastes and habits of the period; there are valuable indications also in the field of comparative literature. If space permitted it would be of interest to present references to and decisions concerning the light literature of the day in a sufficient degree to show not only its characteristics, but something of the literary fashions of the

time, and of the conditions under which the literary artist was working. Of the few notable books of these four years Mme. de Staël's *L'Allemagne* is practically the only one dealt with in these bulletins; as the tribulations of Mme. de Staël are well known and as the formal censorship played only a subordinate rôle I will not linger on the episode.⁵ The production of the period was for the most part unimportant, and this dearth of notable authorship was naturally associated with a strong tendency to translation and with popular support of translations. One of the most interesting instances is that of Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, examined by the censorship in two independent versions of the early part of 1813 (the original had appeared in 1810). M. de Pommereul does not attempt corrections, but solemnly informing the minister that the poem deals with everything that is marvellous in a world of knights and fairies, adds, "L'imagination dans ce champ si vaste serait trop malheureuse si elle n'y trouvait pas de quoi intéresser"; in which we may assume that he was not voicing national feeling but was simply exhibiting a lack of sympathy with the romantic school. In the following month there is recorded the submission of a translation from Schlegel of what is entitled *Cours de Littérature Dramatique*, the original of which had appeared in Germany about two years before. We are surprised to find the book passed without change, in view of Schlegel's close association with Mme. de Staël and of the severe comments now made on the work by the Director General.

Composition tout-à-fait germanique, des longueurs, du vague, une métaphysique obscure, des niaiseries de pédant. Au travers de cette bigarrure des observations fines, une érudition rare. . . . Schlegel paraît peu connaître nos tragiques français, et dans ses éloges ou ses censures n'en dit rien de neuf ou de saillant, mais il dénigre Molière avec un mépris, une bêtise et une ignorance, dont l'excès va jusqu'au ridicule. Le Ciel pour le punir de cette impertinence semble lui avoir ôté le jugement lorsqu'il traite du théâtre anglais. Son idolâtrie pour Shakspeare est poussé jusqu'au délire; aussi admire-t-il beaucoup Calderon qui lui paraît un petit Shakespeare. M. Schlegel ne gâte pas ses Allemands. Il peint assez naïvement les vacillations de leur théâtre, livré tour-à-tour à de plats imitateurs ou à des rêveurs incertains et chimériques.

The leniency here shown to Herr Schlegel was extended a little later to a young author who "paraît un élève de l'école allemande très-peu favorable à notre théâtre"; this was Guizot, then in his twenty-sixth year, and the *Vie de Corneille* which we see thus emerging from the jaws of death was perhaps his entry into the world of authorship.

⁵ Mme. de Staël's clashes with the censorship and the police will be found detailed by Welschinger, together with the fortunes of some other notable authors.

In the variegated array of minor literary productions that the bulletins bring before us the leading place was taken by efforts in the field of romance. And it is to these romances that the critical and corrective labors of the censorship were mainly directed; Portalis in particular we have seen strongly impressed with the necessity of regulating this "reading of the antechamber". It is interesting to find that most of these romances are either translations or imitations of the English, and that the species advancing most rapidly in favor is the historical. This species however was decidedly not in favor with either M. Portalis or M. de Pommereul. In November, 1810, the former laboriously describes the demerits of a work of imagination which was masquerading under the title of *Le Pessimisme ou le Fin du 18me Siècle*; it is, he declares, in turn critical, philosophical, moral, historical, and lewd, but particularly objectionable because of its travesty of history. "On a pensé . . . qu'il n'appartient à personne de mêler des noms connus à des récits chimeriques, et que les malheurs des pères devaient être pour leurs enfans de sérieuses leçons et non l'objet d'un vain amusement". At a later period M. de Pommereul impolitely refers to a romance as "de l'espèce bâtarde qui n'est ni l'histoire ni le roman et qu'on dit historique". Translation from and imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe, Miss Edgeworth, and other British story-tellers frequently appear, and the originals are usually referred to with respect. There is some translation from the German, but it is usually into Dutch for consumption in Holland. Such a book is *Le Chevalier de la Vérité*, described as "très plat mais sans danger"; the director adds, "Il paraît que la Hollande fourmille de traducteurs qui pillent toutes les littératures voisines, et qu'elle fournit peu d'écrivains dans sa langue qui sachent tirer leurs ouvrages de leur propre fond". The romances of German origin are evidently too heavy to be used in the original, but they seem to be making headway in adaptations or imitations. A propos of *L'Anneau Lumineux ou les Mistères de l'Orient*, the bulletin remarks, "Des noirceurs et des monstrosités Anglaises, notre légèreté nous fait passer à la mélancholie allemande". To this melancholy category probably belonged the romance by Mme. de Rome, the most of which was taken up by the heroine's recital of her misfortunes to the daughter of her jailor, and the only admirable feature of which in the censor's opinion is the patience exhibited by the jailor's daughter. The last bulletin of the series, of January, 1814, refers to *Sindall et Annesly ou le Faux Ami*, as a "roman traduit de l'allemand. Sans vraisemblance comme sans intérêt, rempli jusqu'à satiété de maximes triviales et de ces détails insipides

que les Allemands sont habitués à prendre pour du naturel et que nos écrivains, je ne dis pas nos auteurs, s'empressent de copier faute de talent et d'imagination. La traduction est devenue un métier, et celui qui nuit la plus au maintien du goût." M. de Pommereul seems to the last unconscious that there may be any connection between this deplorable condition of things and the activity of the office over which he was presiding.

Among the literary fashions of the period that are indicated in the bulletins is, we are surprised to learn, a demand for books on Mme. de Maintenon; "Il est", we are told, "à la mode d'en parler et de la vanter". The output of poetry seems slight and the director's remarks about specimens submitted are usually disrespectful. M. Cantalou would publish *Oeuvres Poétiques et Lyriques*; he is allowed to, but the censor crossly remarks that he has made a mistake in the title for there is nothing in the book remotely resembling a poem or a lyric. A producer of *Pensées Tristes* is described as a poet who has lost his mistress and been thrown thereby into a melancholy that he labors to make interesting and profitable; "mais les grandes et véritables douleurs sont muets". A translation of selections from Pope is received with an amiability that is exceptional, and with some remarks on the literary connections between France and England that are of interest. "Voltaire est le premier qui ait fait connaître Pope en France. Depuis ce temps Le Tourneur nous familiarisa avec Young et Shakspeare comme Prévot nous avait fait goûter Richardson, mais c'est l'émigration pendant la révolution et le retour des émigrés qui a surtout fait parmi nous la fortune de la littérature anglaise".

I have perhaps yielded somewhat to a natural tendency to dwell disproportionately on the trivialities and illiberalities of these reports. A more extended survey would reveal much sound sense. But it is not necessary to moralize on this episode in the history of censorship. As censorships go it was perhaps on the whole not a very bad one, and it may be doubted whether the literature and learning of the First Empire would have been distinguished under any conditions. Sober thought and modest worth were not in fashion; the imaginative faculties were dulled or satiated amidst the engrossing marvels of every-day fact. Literature will be trivial when men think it such, and public spirit cannot endure without ideals. France under Napoleon had lost the sense of proportion, and France paid the penalty in various ways.

It was in May, 1813, between two German battle-days, that Count Beugnot, falling into conversation with the Emperor on these

matters, suddenly found himself violently reproached with being one of those "ideologues" who would have freedom of the press and other such excesses of revolutionary days. And putting his hand to the hilt of his sword, Napoleon cried, "Tant que celle-là pendra à mon côté, et puisse-t-elle y pendre encore longtemps, vous n'aurez aucune des libertés après lesquelles vous soupirez". That sword was broken within the year, and on April 3, 1814, the Senate which had accepted all the tyrannies of the régime and which had never once dared to use the defenses of freedom that the Constitution had pretended to endow it with, passed solemnly an Act of Deposition which in its recital of these tyrannies declared that Napoleon had "constamment soumise à la censure arbitraire de la police, la liberté de la presse, établie et consacrée comme l'un des droits de la nation". It was not an accurate statement, and the Senate had no right to utter a reproach; before the end of the year these same senators had joined in the setting-up of the censorship of the Restoration.

VICTOR COFFIN.